

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SCCT-01 SY-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10 SAM-01 SAB-01 USSS-00

(ISO) W

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R 301344Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2517

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 336

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, XF

SUBJ: PLO TRIAL OF BRITISH AIRCRAFT HIJACKERS

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1. DAMASCUS PRESS JANUARY 30 CARRIED SYRIAN ARAB

NEWS AGENCY REPORT THAT THE "PALESTINE REVOLUTIONARY SECURITY COURT" HAD ISSUED UNANIMOUS VERDICT OF GUILT AGAINST FIVE HIJACKERS OF BRITISH AIRCRAFT AT DUBAY AIRPORT. OPERATION LEADER SHAWKAT NAZMI MOHAMMAD YUSSIF AND HIS DEPUTY YUSSIF KHALIL SALIH WERE SENTENCED TO FIFTEEN YEARS IMPRISONMENT AT HARD LABOR. QASIM MOHAMMAD SA'ID AND TALEB KHALID SAAD AD-DIN RECEIVED TEN-YEAR SENTENCES, AND ADNAN ATIYEH SEVEN YEARS. REPORT STATED THAT VERDICT WAS ISSUED IN PRESENCE OF FIVE ACCUSED AND WOULD BE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION, WE PRESUME BY PLO LEADERSHIP. SENTENCES ARE TO RUN FROM DATE OF ORIGINAL DETENTION OF HIJACKERS AT A "REFORMATORY CENTER OF THE PLO." REPORT STATED THAT HIJACKERS HAD ADMITTED THEIR GUILT DURING TRIAL AND EXPRESSED THEIR REPENTENCE. OPERATION LEADER SHAWKAT, REPORT STATED, TOLD JOURNALISTS WHO HAD MET HIM JANUARY 29 AT REFORMATORY CENTER THAT GROUP NOW CONVINCED ITS ACTIONS HAD HURT TRUE INTERESTS OF PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION.

2. ARTICLE ALSO STATED THAT PLANNER OF OPERATION, AHMED ABD AL-GHAFUR (ABU MAHAMOUD), HAD NOT BEEN PROSECUTED BECAUSE HIS DEATH HAD BEEN CONFIRMED. HAJACKERS HAD TESTIFIED, HOWEVER, THAT ABD AL-GHAFUR HAD BEEN LINKED TO NON-PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS AND HAD MISLEAD THEM INTO BELIEVING THEY WERE HELPING PALESTINIAN CAUSE.

3. COMMENT: ANNOUNCEMENT OF TRIAL AND PRISON SENTENCES FOR HIJACKERS IS CLEARLY PART OF PLO'S CURRENT CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE MODERATE AND RESPONSIBLE IMAGE AND TO DISASSOCIATE ITSELF BOTH FROM CURRENT PALESTINE TERRORISTS AND ITS OWN PAST TERRORIST HISTORY.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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